

### GEORGE WARE BARBER

George Ware Barber (1890-1948), American naturalist, educator and writer, and member of the New York Entomological Society, died in his 59th year in New York City, December 5th 1948. He was descendant of an early New England family, and was born at Hyde Park, Massachusetts, August 3, 1890. He early manifested an interest in natural history and in every phase of outdoor life, and particularly in entomology and ornithology. He was graduated B.Sc. from the then Massachusetts Agricultural College in 1913, and M.S. and Sc.D. from Harvard in 1925 and 1927 respectively. He entered the service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, in its then Bureau of Entomology January 1st, 1914, and worked thereafter on wireworms in Missouri, on range caterpillar in New Mexico, and on Hessian fly in Kansas and Maryland. During World War I, he was on furlough from the Department as Lieutenant of Cavalry in the U. S. Army, November 25, 1917 to May 19, 1919. On its termination and his return to the Bureau, his assignments thereafter included investigations of the European corn borer in New England and Ohio and of corn earworm in various Eastern States from New England to Georgia. He retired from the Government service at the age of 55 on November 15th, 1945, though he continued thereafter as Bureau collaborator without pay. Shortly thereafter, he entered upon special investigations of the behavior of the house fly and the toxicity of new insecticides notably DDT under the auspices of Rutgers University and was located at New Brunswick, New Jersey, and in this capacity he served until death.

Dr. Barber performed much work of lasting value in the course of his various assignments during his long period of service. Doubtless, however, his most outstanding single achievement and that of greatest practical usefulness was the discovery and development during his Bureau service of oil-insecticide treatments of sweet corn for earworm control. In 1936 his tests showed that a little highly refined white mineral oil injected into the silk at the tips of the corn ears would protect them from injury. Until this discovery was made, no satisfactory treatment



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for the protection of corn ears from damage by this insect was known. By 1939 Dr. Barber had improved the efficiency of this oil treatment by adding a very small percentage of pyrethrins, without producing an undesirable flavor or residue. He also developed a practical method of applying the treatment profitably not only to small plantings of sweet corn by home growers but also to commercial plantings of sweet corn and seed corn by means of hand-force oilers or by atomization onto the silks. By 1942, Dr. Barber had demonstrated that a very small percentage of dichloroethyl ether or styrene dibromide could be substituted for war-scarce pyrethrins. Following his discoveries extensive and profitable use has been made of the oil-insecticide method by sweet corn growers in Florida, New Jersey, Texas, California, Idaho and other states. He received a meritorious promotion in recognition of this accomplishment and was cited for it by the U. S. Department of Agriculture in its Research Achievement Sheet No. 16-E, January 8, 1945. His work at Rutgers University also amply demonstrated his unusual qualities as scientist and as educator. He had a profound influence on his associates and especially on the graduate students in entomology. His broad knowledge and wide experience and his insatiable capacity for work were a continuous source of wonder to his associates there. Although he was deeply interested in ornithology, it was not often possible for Dr. Barber to spare time from more pressing entomological studies for more than non-continuous field observations as opportunity afforded in various western and south-western States, as well as in Virginia, Georgia and Florida, therefore his notes of necessity are somewhat fragmentary. His library, however, was particularly rich in many of the more important and more valuable contributions in ornithological literature.

During his approximately 36 years of research work Dr. Barber was author or joint author of 98 publications on entomological and related subjects. Even a cursory survey of these reveals abundant evidence of the high character and thoroughness of his work, his close and thoughtful observation, and the wide range of his interests.

No biographical sketch of Dr. Barber would be complete that

did not at least make mention of his very unusual insect collection and his magnificent scientific library. During his many and varied assignments, he always took every opportunity to make noteworthy or worthwhile collections of adult and larval material wherever found. In course of time this insect collection expanded to several hundred Schmitt boxes of pinned specimens and many thousands of specimens in alcohol, most of which was taxonomically classified and arranged, and all accompanied by full notes. He spent countless hours of labor thereon and in care of light traps often until late at night, following long days of field work.

But it was Dr. Barber's library that was really notable: From boyhood he had been a passionate lover of books, and with the passing of the years he gradually formed a large and increasingly valuable collection of several thousand volumes, this being particularly strong in natural science and in general literature. The scientific portion comprised not only an unusually large working collection of the type of books and pamphlets ordinarily found on the work-table of an average investigator, but it also contained numerous rare taxonomic classics and many complete sets of scientific periodicals as well. General literature too was represented, in addition to the usual items of general interest, by many beautifully bound illustrated standard sets in Classical, English and American literature. An enthusiastic philatelist, he likewise accumulated a large and valuable stamp collection, having particular emphasis on the more artistic forms. In addition to his interest in science, he was also an accomplished musician, could perform creditably on several instruments, formed a collection of sheet music, and was actively identified with various musical activities.

On July 28, 1919, Dr. Barber married Miss Estelle Hulse of Chattanooga, Tennessee, who, with their only child, George Winston, survive him. The son is now a research associate in chemistry in the Medical School of the University of Pennsylvania, after having recently completed academic and graduate work at Yale, obtaining his Ph.D. degree in June 1949. For the past several years Dr. Barber and family have made their home at 20 Edgewood Avenue, New Haven, Connecticut.

In addition to the New York Entomological Society, his membership or fellowships also included the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Association of Economic Entomologists, the Entomological Society of America, the Ecological Society of America, the Agricultural History Society, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Ornithologist's Union.

On the whole, Dr. Barber's record has been that of performance of unusual usefulness. The native bent from boyhood for observation of nature gradually was developed by him into a great enthusiasm. Possessing a strongly marked individuality and much personal charm, he attained a most enviable gift for making and keeping friends and he had many of them. The writers of this notice are thankful not only for having had his friendship but also with full hearts are grateful for the high privilege of having been counted by him among his intimate colleagues. We mourn his passing, and we cherish his memory.

—J. S. WADE AND B. B. PEPPER